



## **RHODE ISLAND SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF**

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

One Corliss Park

Providence, RI 02908

---

### **MEETING MINUTES – General Meeting**

**Date:** October 4, 2016

**Time:** 6:00 p.m.

**Minutes recorded by:** Helen Edwards

**Minutes approved on: November 1, 2016**

**ASL Interpreters:** Heather Anderson and Christine West

**CART Reporter:** Shelly Deming

#### **Call to Order**

- a. Chairperson Montgomery called the meeting of the RI School for the Deaf Board of Trustees to order at 6:12 p.m. in the Cafeteria of the RI School for the Deaf.

#### **Roll Call of Board of Trustees**

- b. **Trustees in Attendance:** Amanda Montgomery, Joseph Fischgrund, Nora Meah and Octavian Robinson
- c. **Excused:** Jane Canulla and Danielle Loughlin
- d. **Administration in Attendance:** Amy Vincenzi, Nancy Maguire Heath, Val Houser and Barbara Cesana

- **Public Comment:**

- No one registered for public comment.

- **Acceptance of Previous Meeting Minutes:**

- Joseph Fischgrund made a motion to approve the meeting minutes, with minor edits, from August 2, 2016; seconded by Octavian Robinson. Motion approved with all in favor.
- Octavian Robinson made a motion to approve the meeting minutes with edits from September 6, 2016; seconded by Nora Meah. Motion approved with all in favor.

- **Reports / Action Items:**

- Report of the Chairperson
- BOT member nomination update  
Jodi Merryman was nominated at our last Board meeting. Her nomination will be added to next week's agenda at RIDE. We are hopeful Jodi will begin serving at our November meeting.
- Chairperson Montgomery also reminded the Board to keep in mind anyone with a financial background or a person that has strategic plan experience who might be interested in serving on the Board.
- Board Handbook – The Board's work is nearing completion on the new Board Handbook. There are a few more edits needed to the Handbook. Chairperson Montgomery will send it to the Board for the November 1<sup>st</sup> meeting.

- Director Maguire Heath introduced the Faculty Speakers for the night: Valerie Houser is the Curriculum & Instruction Specialist at the school and Barbara is our resident Aspiring Principal. They presented on *Thinking Maps*, this year's major initiative. *Thinking Maps* is a comprehensive, visual language developed by Alper, Hyerle and Yeager. It has been implemented school- wide to encourage students in developing more skillful and deeper thinking. A detailed description was included in the Board folders.

#### Report of the Director

- Two days of *Thinking Maps* Leadership Training was completed by Director Maguire Heath, Barbara Cesana and Mary Pendergast, Special Education Administrator. Val Houser, Kathy Kay and Robin Henderson, teaching faculty, also attended two days of *Thinking Maps* Train the Trainers instruction. They will become our in-house trainers in order to ensure sustainability of this initiative. A full day workshop for all staff (*Thinking Map – Part 2*) is scheduled for October 24th with Heidi Henderson as the consultant/instructor.
- The School currently has 69 students enrolled from 27 communities. One additional preschooler is expected within the next two weeks.
- Staffing: Teacher Staff positions continue to be advertised until filled. There is one teacher expected to take a Maternity leave by October 29<sup>th</sup>. A three-month sub position is posted. The Librarian position is still unfilled and remains posted. One Audio Test Technician is out on medical leave, leaving lowered staffing in that department.
- RISDeaf has two students who will attend the Deaf Latinx Conference October 7-10 at American School for the Deaf in West Hartford. Gerlany Mejia, RISDeaf social worker, will chaperone Juan Fernandes and Yasmin Sicaju.
- Yasmin Sicaju was recently announced as a winner in the National Very Special Arts Competition entitled "*Yo soy, Je Suis, I am...the World*". Her drawing will hang in Washington, DC at the Kennedy Center for the month of November.
- Our Varsity Soccer and Youth Soccer seasons are underway. New varsity soccer uniforms were recently purchased (long overdue). Upcoming after school activities are Girl Scouts and Rock Climbing for elementary students, which are expected to start October 25<sup>th</sup>.
- The 125<sup>th</sup> Birthday BBQ was our final birthday celebration. It was quite successful with 149 community attendees. Discussions are taking place to consider making this an annual event and merge it with a Homecoming celebration.
- Last week RISDeaf hosted, "Everything You Want to Know About RISD in Spanish". This presentation by the administration to parents was conducted to help Latino parents better understand RI school structures and to help them understand the School's bilingual (ASL/English) model,. It was well attended and appreciated by our Spanish speaking families. Special thanks to Valerie Houser, Barbara Cesana and Mary Pendergast who helped make this evening a success. Child Care was provided.
- PARCC Scores were disappointing. We had several students who are showing a stronger ability to demonstrate their knowledge on this kind of test, but overall there is still much work to do. The *Bedrock* reading and *Thinking Maps* initiatives are designed to help students develop analytical skills needed to help students approach standardize testing more successfully.
- In Board packets the following was included:
  - Current enrollment by district
  - Student grade levels break- out graph.

#### Report of the Assistant Director for Finance and Operations

- Assistant Director Vincenzi presented that the current spending is on track, less than 1/4<sup>th</sup> of the allocated budget has been spent. Quarters 2 & 3 will have higher payrolls due to stipends paid to staff for sports and club activities.
- The FY17 revised budget and FY18 Budget have been fully submitted to the Governor's Office. RIDE did not request any changes from our budget submission of 8/29/16.
- The playground has been fully paid for: this expenditure was included in FY16. New river birch trees have been planted next to each playground in hopes of providing better shade for youngsters. Other tree work (removing dead trees/grinding stumps/trimming) was completed this month.
- The long awaited wheelchair accessible mini activity bus is due to be completed within the next two weeks. It began final production last week. This will be a great help to the School as we seek to get students out to the community more regularly, especially those in prevocational programs. Renting a wheelchair accessible bus each time has been a costly expense.

#### Discussion Items

- Director Maguire Heath thanked all Board Members who attended the 125<sup>th</sup> Birthday BBQ. She was very pleased with the community turnout. Suggestions were discussed for future planning if this event is repeated in the future.
- Strategic Planning: Chairperson Montgomery stated that the Board received four bid responses for the Strategic Plan RFP. The plan is to recommend one vendor to DOA. Volunteers from the Board are needed to review proposals. They will also be included in the interviewing process if one is needed. Selection of the final vendor is based on a point rating system that was described in the original RFP. The final decision is made by DOA. The bids came from two companies in Rhode Island and two in Massachusetts. Joseph Fischgrund volunteered to join Ms. Montgomery, Ms. Vincenzi, and Director Maguire Heath as a proposal reviewer and interviewer.

The meeting adjourned at 7:52 pm